

Acting Secretary of the Navy. Prior to this, Mr. O'Keefe served as Comptroller for the Department of Defense, 1989–92. He has also served on the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee as minority counsel, 1987–89; minority staff director, 1986–87; and majority professional staff member, 1981–85. Mr. O'Keefe also served as a budget analyst for Naval Sea

Systems at the Department of Defense, 1980–81.

Mr. O'Keefe graduated from Loyola University (B.A., 1977) and Syracuse University (M.P.A., 1978). He was born January 27, 1956, in Monterey, CA. Mr. O'Keefe is married, has three children, and resides in Arlington, VA.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Ambassador Saud Nasir Al-Sabah of Kuwait

December 17, 1992

The President. I don't think anybody has been more steadfast in their support of a common purpose than you have, and I am very grateful to you. And I hope you'll pay my respects, when you go home, to His Majesty.

But I want to take this opportunity to thank you all. During that Desert Storm you stayed in close touch, and you just did a dramatic and wonderful job for the coalition. And we're going to miss you, darn it.

But best of luck back there.

Q. Going to Somalia?

Q. Mr. President, are you going to Somalia for Christmas?

Ambassador Al-Sabah. I wanted to say a few words to express on behalf of His Highness the Amir and my government and the people of Kuwait our deep sense of gratitude for your support, your leadership, and the liberation of Kuwait. And our relationship with the United States, I assure you, will remain steadfast, strong as you like it to be.

And I wish you all the best in your future endeavors, Mr. President, and tell you the Kuwaiti people hold you in deep respect for your role here. And we're all looking forward to seeing you in Kuwait as soon as your time allows it, Mr. President.

The President. Well, someday I want to do that, I tell you. I really do. It's a wonder-

ful, wonderful invitation.

Q. Will we see you in Somalia soon, Mr. President?

The President. Maybe some of these fellows don't understand that under our new policy that's been in effect now for 2 months, that we have a more rigid policy than we used to. You've been in here many times. But under the new policy, I don't take questions at these, essentially what are photo opportunities. And so I just simply cannot—I understand their interest in whether I might travel someplace, but of course you're welcome to say anything you want.

Q. Are you going?

Q. May we request a news conference then, sir?

The President. We've had 235 news conferences. Isn't that enough?

Thank you all very much.

Q. You mean, you won't answer the question of whether you're considering?

The President. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

Q. I hope you—

The President. We will, we will. We're having the family coming here soon and everything.

Note: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.